

# **Saint Thomas the Apostle**

2312 E Campbell Ave  
Phoenix, AZ 85016

Diocese of Phoenix

## **Advent Parish Mission 2017**

Fr. Zachary of the Mother of God, SOLT



**Let the Joy of the Manger  
enter your heart.**

# Advent Expectations from Pope Benedict XVI



ADVENT, A TIME OF  
EXPECTATIONS VATICAN CITY, 28  
NOV 2010 (VIS) – At midday today,  
the first Sunday of Advent and  
beginning of the liturgical year, the  
Holy Father appeared at the window  
of his Study to pray the Angelus with  
faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square.

The Pope remarked on the dual nature of the period of Advent, which “looks both to the first coming of the Son of God, when He was born of the Virgin Mary, and to His glorious return, when He will come ‘to judge the living and the dead’”. He described this “expectation” as a profoundly human aspect in which the faith becomes, so to say, a single thing with our flesh and our heart.

“Expectation and awaiting represent a dimension that touches our entire individual, family and social existence”, he added. “Expectation is present in many situations, from the smallest and most insignificant to the most important”. These include “a couple expecting a child; awaiting a relative a relative or friend who comes to visit us from far way;... the expectation of the result of some decisive examination; ... in personal relations the expectation of meeting the loved one. ... We could say that man is alive so long as he expects, so long as hope remains alive in his Heart. And man can be recognized by his expectations: our moral and spiritual ‘statue’ may be measured by what our hopes are”.

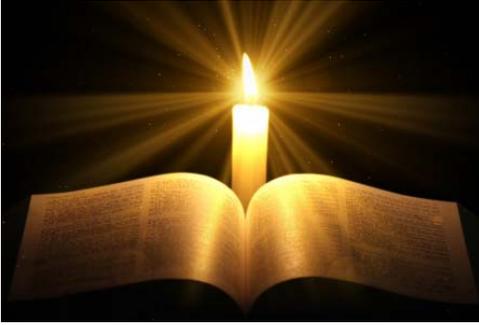
Thus, “in this time of preparation for Christmas each of us may ask ourselves: what do YOU expect? ... And this same question can be posed at the level of the family, the community, the nation. What do we expect together? What

unites our aspirations, what brings us together?” in this context, Benedict XVI recalled how “in Israel in the period prior to Jesus’ birth there was a very strong expectation of the Messiah, ... who would free the people from all moral and political slavery and establish the Kingdom of God.

“But no-one could have imagined that the Messiah would be born of a humble girl like Mary, who had been promised in marriage to the good Joseph. Neither could she have imagined it; yet in her heart the expectation of the Savior was so great, her faith and hope so ardent, that in her He could find a worthy mother. ... There is a mysterious correspondence between the expectation of God and that of Mary, the creature ‘full of grace’, completely transparent before the Almighty’s plan of love. Let us learn from her, the woman of Advent, to live daily life with a new spirit, with feelings of profound expectation which only the coming of God can satisfy”.

In his greeting following the Marian prayer, Benedict XVI made various references to respect for unborn life. Addressing Polish pilgrims he said: “With Mary, who lovingly awaited the birth of the Divine Child, let us persevere in our prayers, thanking God for the gift of life and asking Him to protect all human existence. May the future of the world become the civilization of love and of life”.





## Advent is a Holy Season

ADVENT is a Holy Season of joyful preparation for the coming of Christ. We are to have a burning desire for Christ to come and be born into our lives in a new and profound way this Christmas. At the same time, we are to have an expectant faith in Jesus' second coming in glory. We live between the two comings of Christ and are privileged to have Him come to us in the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, the Living Word, and in others. Centering our lives in the Most Holy Eucharist, living the Eternal Word, and serving Christ in others are some of the most powerful ways we prepare for the coming of Christ.

Jesus tells in the Gospel to “WATCH” and pray so that we are not caught off guard. Advent is a time of prayer, penance and preparation. Jesus says “What I say to you, I say to all: Watch! “To “watch” or to “be on guard means to be attentive. We are all servants awaiting the Master’s return. We are to ask ourselves what is our beloved Master looking for upon His return? What are His needs? What are His expectations? We are to prepare well so that our beloved Master is pleased when he returns. We as servants, stay focused on fulfilling the instructions given to us by our Master. Moreover, as beloved servants we seek to please the Beloved when He comes in His visitation.

We are called to cultivate the garden of our souls so that the Beloved will be pleased in His visitation. We ask the Holy Spirit to cultivate the garden with virtues, and to root up the weeds of selfishness and vice. When Jesus comes this Christmas we want there to be room at the inn of our hearts for Him. We want Jesus to be pleased to remain with us.

We are to “watch” and “be on guard” which also means we are to guard against the attacks of the evil one, the ways of the world, and the lusts of the flesh and eyes. Do not be deceived by the devil, the flesh and the world. Advent is not a time to be wasted with the anxieties of shopping and decorating. Advent is not a time to be given to “parties” and eating and drinking.

Advent is a time of prayer, penance and preparation. The degree to which we prepare will be the degree to which we receive the gift of Jesus in a new and profound way this Christmas. “WATCH” and “BE ON GUARD!”

I urge all of you to ask Our Blessed Mother Mary and St. Joseph to help you prepare for the birth of the Divine Child, Jesus, in a new and profound way this Christmas. Ask Our Lady and St. Joseph to help you stay focused, to watch and be on guard. Pray by attending daily Mass and living the Liturgy. Pray the Holy Rosary daily. Pray the Sacred Scriptures with your family. Fast so that your soul has room to receive the Christ Child. Do penance so that He will be pleased with the room that has been prepared. Come to the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that the obstacles to Jesus’ coming are removed. **MARANATHA! COME, LORD JESUS!**

**Allow the Lord  
to enter  
the Inn  
of your  
heart!**



# Advent is a Holy and Joyful Time

JMJ + OBT

Omnia Pro Iesu Per Mariam!

ADVENT is a joyful and holy time the Church gives us to PREPARE to receive Jesus in a new and profound way each Christmas. We must understand that since JESUS IS GOD the event of Christmas is an eternal reality. Simply put, WE CAN RECEIVE THE GIFT OF CHRIST IN A NEW WAY EACH AND EVERY CHRISTMAS. JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON.

God cannot be constrained by time and space. Christmas is not just an historical event. CHRISTMAS IS ETERNAL. You will receive Jesus, the gift of the Father's Love, IF you prepare and are open to receive the gift. Thus, Advent is given to us to prepare to receive Jesus. This preparation includes prayer and penance (ALL are encouraged to come to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, known by many as Confession, so that the Holy Spirit can prepare the way for the Lord).

To help you prepare to receive the gift of Jesus we will provide you with some reflections. First, pray and ask your Guardian Angel, Patron Saints, St. Joseph, and all the Holy Angels and Saints to intercede for you and help you prepare. Furthermore, ask Our Lady and the Holy Spirit to help you receive Jesus because Jesus came to us through Our Blessed Mother Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, prayerfully consider the following:

Reflection#1: We need to be watching for Jesus and looking to see what path He is taking to come into our hearts.



- The Holy Spirit will reveal obstacles which need to be removed from His path. Ask the Holy Spirit to remove these obstacles.
- Empty ourselves of the limited ideas of Who God is- He is beyond all knowing and greater than our greatest desires – stop projecting yourself onto Him – He is limitless

Reflection #2: Ask yourself: What is the PURPOSE Jesus has for coming into my soul? The Divine Child seeks to:

- Establish His Kingdom and rule His Kingdom in my soul.

- To govern my heart and soul.
- To transform me from within and give me peace.
- To help me become more childlike.
- To better know His Mother and Our Mother, Mary.

How is He doing these things? What else is He doing? How can I cooperate with this Divine action in my soul?

Reflection #3: Learn to WATCH in the Eastern sense of the word. WATCH as a servant watches and serves his Master. As we are watching Jesus on this path to our hearts:

- Be attentive to Him.
- Try to please Him in all that you think and do.
- Try to anticipate His desires.
- Practice the tender hospitality of a loving and attentive servant whose only desire is to please the Master.
- Ask: What does He need to be happy in my soul?
- Ask: What does He want to find there in order to be comfortable and want to remain in my soul?

Be aware: Know that Jesus has a PLAN for this journey into your heart which includes:

- A particular PATH.
- A certain PROGRAM.
- A definite PURPOSE.
- A perfect TIMING.

CHART THE PATH through journaling. Begin in the heart. See His arrival on Christmas and ask yourself how He will get there. Where is He right now on this journey into the very depths of your soul?

We want to meet and even exceed Our Lord's NEEDS and EXPECTATIONS and we want Him to find DELIGHT in our heart and soul when He arrives. Ask Our Lady how to live as the beloved and please the Beloved of our soul, Jesus. We are praying that you have the most fruitful Advent of your life and the greatest Christmas of your life. Please pray for us.



## Advent Rejoice

JMJ + OBT

Omnia Pro Iesu Per Mariam!

REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near. (Phil 4:4,5)

Joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. God the Father and God the Son, Jesus Christ, have asked God the Holy Spirit to come to us and prepare us to receive the joy of Christmas. The Holy Spirit reveals that the Lord is near, and when we recognize this Truth then our hearts leap up for joy.

today  
I CHOOSE  
Joy

The Holy Spirit is the one who inspires Sacred Scripture. The Holy Spirit is the One who REVEALS the Eternal Word of the Father, Jesus the Christ. When the Holy Spirit reveals that Jesus is present then we REJOICE. Do you understand how REVELATION and REJOICING go together? Ask the Holy Spirit for these gifts. Better yet, ask for a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, Who is Person-Love, Person-Gift. A most efficacious (big word for effective) way to ask for a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit is to ask this grace from Our Blessed Mother, Mary, because the Immaculate Virgin Mary is the spouse of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will help us fulfill all that He asks of us in Sacred Scripture. The Holy Spirit asks us through St. Paul to rejoice, Pray and Give Thanks. We are called to Rejoice, Pray and Give Thanks ALWAYS! The Holy Spirit will teach us how!

We are to REJOICE IN THE LORD, ALWAYS! As we already noted, this rejoicing comes through recognizing that the Lord is near. Furthermore, we are to rejoice IN the Lord. True rejoicing comes from living our Baptism IN the Lord. True rejoicing comes from living IN the Most Holy Eucharist as Jesus is really, truly and substantially present. When we are

in a state of grace and receive the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist we REJOICE. When we live our Baptism and the Eucharistic Life of Jesus we REJOICE.

We are to PRAY WITHOUT CEASING! The Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray. In fact we are told by the Holy Spirit in Sacred Scripture that “the Spirit also helps our weakness. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself pleads for us with unutterable groanings. And He who searches the hearts knows what the Spirit desires, that He pleads for the saints according to God.” (Rom 8:26, 27)

We are directed by the Holy Spirit: “IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES GIVE THANKS, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil.” (1 Thes 5:18-22)

When we have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, we will REJOICE, PRAY AND GIVE THANKS! As the Holy Spirit and Our Lady help us prepare to receive Jesus in a new and profound way this Christmas, we pray: “May the God of peace make you perfectly Holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ.” Remembering “the One Who calls you is faithful, and He will also accomplish it.” (1 Thes 5:23,24)



# Advent God is Knocking

JMJ + OBT

Omnia Pro Iesu Per Mariam!

**GOD IS KNOCKING** on the door of your heart. Jesus, True God and True Man, is about to be born for us in a new and profound way **THIS CHRISTMAS**. Are you going to let Him enter the door of your heart or is there no room at the inn? Today is just like 2017 years ago. There are those who are prepared to receive Jesus, and those who will be blessed this Christmas. Then there are those who are too busy with their own affairs or the affairs of the world, and these will cry there is no room at the inn.

**GOD IS KNOCKING** on the door of your heart. He wants to enter your heart, soul, mind, body, life, family, and community. However, He will never force Himself upon you or others. We see this in the Annunciation and Incarnation of Christ (St. Luke's Gospel 1:26-38). The Angel Gabriel appears to the Blessed Virgin Mary and announces the Divine Plan of God that Mary would become the Mother of God and the word would become flesh and dwell among us. The angel Gabriel, sent from God, awaits Our Blessed Mother's response. God desires to give the greatest gift to mankind, His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. However, God will not force Himself upon us. He will not give the great gift of Himself without our consent.

**GOD IS KNOCKING** on the door of your heart. Let Him enter and bring great blessings to your life and those you love. You only need to say "YES" or "FIAT" like Our Blessed Mother. Of course, you need to mean it! Humble yourself, like Our Lady, and with the eyes of faith see Jesus coming to you. the Plan of God has been announced to you in Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church. Believe and receive the great gift of Jesus this Christmas.



**GOD IS KNOCKING** on the door of your heart. Learn from Mary, the Mother of God, to open yourself to the Plan of God. Journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem (the House of Bread, the Most Holy Eucharist) with St. Joseph and Our Lady with Jesus in the womb. See the wonders of God coming forth in this journey. See with the eyes of St. Joseph and Our Blessed Mother. Contemplate the goodness of God and enter into the mystery of Divine Love. Prayerfully prepare to receive Jesus.

GOD IS KNOCKING on the door of your heart. This fourth Sunday of the Holy Season of Advent, known as “Angelus Sunday” is a gift to remind us to immediately prepare for the entry of Christ into our lives this Christmas. Pray the Angelus and think about Who you are saying “YES” to and that your “YES” is to the fullness of the mystery of Christ. Think about how the mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary (which you should pray everyday) are contained in the closing prayer of the Angelus. PRAY AND PREPARE TO PLEASE JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH as the HOLY FAMILY looks for room at the inn of your heart and the hearts of those you love.

PRAY THE ANGELUS IN THE HOLY SPIRIT and ask the HOLY SPIRIT to come upon you as you UNITE YOURSELF WITH OUR LADY saying “FIAT” to the Plan of God. Here is the Angelus (traditionally prayed at 6 a.m., 12 noon, and 6 p.m.)

V. The Angel of the Lord  
declared unto Mary,  
R. And she conceived of the  
Holy Spirit.  
*Hail Mary, full of grace, the  
Lord is with thee. Blessed art  
thou among women, and  
blessed is the fruit of thy  
womb, Jesus. Holy Mary,  
Mother of God, pray for us  
sinners, now and at the hour of  
our death. Amen*



V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.  
R. Be it done unto me according to Thy Word.  
Hail Mary, etc...  
V. And the Word was made flesh,  
R. And dwelt among us.  
Hail Mary, etc...  
V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.  
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

**Let us pray:**

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord,  
Thy Grace into our hearts;  
that, we to whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son, was made known by  
the message of an Angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to  
the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.



# Christmas is Eternal

JMJ + OBT  
Omnia Pro Iesu Per Mariam!



CHRISTMAS IS ETERNAL! God, from all Eternity chose to give the gift of Himself. In Jesus, to all of mankind. JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON, and the season becomes eternal in the gift of Jesus. Open yourself to receive the gift of Jesus and share the gift of Jesus with all. The good news is that God's giving of Jesus is eternal, and we can receive Jesus eternally.

Remember to be thankful for your gifts. Remember to share your gifts. Every good parent wants their children to be thankful to the giver of the gifts, and every good parent wants their children to share their gifts. God who is Goodness Himself, desires that we, His beloved children, remain thankful for the gift of Jesus and share the gift of Jesus. We show our thanks in word and deed. We are to live the life of Jesus that we receive as a Divine Gift of Divine Love.

We are to share the gift of Jesus just as Our Heavenly Father shares the gift of Himself in His Only Begotten Son. We are to share the gift of Jesus just as Jesus shares Himself and gives us everything the Father has given Him. We are to share the gift of Jesus just as the Holy Spirit, Person-Gift and Person-Love, shares Himself and gives us the Spirit of the Father and the Son.

God's sharing of His Divine Life is the Christmas gift given to us at Christmas in Jesus. It is God's Plan from all eternity that we share in His Divine Life. It is also God's Plan that we share the Divine Life we have received with others. SIMPLY PUT, WE RECEIVE THE CHRISTMAS GIFT OF JESUS AND SHARE THE CHRISTMAS GIFT OF JESUS WITH ALL.

Christmas is not complete until Jesus is born into the lives of all mankind. CHRISTMAS IS FOR ALL! Christmas is for Catholics and our Christian brothers and sisters. Christmas is for Jews. Christmas is for Muslims. Christmas is for Hindus. Christmas is for Buddhists. Christmas is for Taoists. Christmas is for Agnostics. Christmas is for Atheists. CHRISTMAS IS FOR ALL WHEN WE

RECEIVE THE GIFT OF JESUS AND SHARE THE GIFT OF JESUS!

Remember everyone was created to receive the gift of Jesus. Remember everyone longs, deep within, for the gift of Jesus. Help everyone receive the gift of Jesus. Learn from the manger scene how people were drawn to Jesus. Learn from the Holy Virgin Mary and St. Joseph how to share the gift of Jesus.

CHRISTMAS IS ETERNAL! We were created to receive the gift of Jesus. We were created to give the gift of Jesus. LET ALL ENTER INTO THE ETERNAL GIFT OF CHRIST SO THAT THE ETERNAL DAY OF CHRIST BRINGS THE LIGHT, HAPPINESS, PEACE AND JOY THAT IS GOD'S CHRISTMAS GIFT TO HIS CHILDREN.

Through the intercession of Our Lady, St. Joseph, St. Michael, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John, St. James, St. Theresa, St. Rita, St. Philomena, St. Jude, St. Nicholas, St. Alphonsus, St. Peter Chrysologus, St. Zachary, St. Elizabeth, St. John the Baptist, St. Perpetua, St. Felicity, St. Francis, St. Veronica Guiliani, St. Joan of Arc, St. Louis, St. Joseph Calasanz, St. Padre Pio, St. Patrick, St. Bridget, St. Columban and all Holy Angels and Saints may you be abundantly blessed in the covenant of Communion of the Most Holy Trinity, with my Priestly blessing.



## **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

O Come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

### ***Refrain:***

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

O come, Thou Wisdom, from on high,  
And order all things far and nigh;  
To us the path of knowledge show,  
And teach us in her ways to go.

### ***Refrain***

O come, o come, Thou Lord of might,  
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height  
In ancient times did give the law,  
In cloud, and majesty, and awe.

### ***Refrain***

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse's stem,  
From ev'ry foe deliver them  
That trust Thy mighty power to save,  
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

### ***Refrain***

O come, Thou Key of David, come,  
And open wide our heav'nly home,  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
That we no more have cause to sigh.

***Refrain***

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,  
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadow put to flight.

***Refrain***

O come, Desire of nations, bind  
In one the hearts of all mankind;  
Bid every strife and quarrel cease  
And fill the world with heaven's peace.

***Refrain***



*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

O come, all ye faithful,  
Joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him born the King of angels;

**Refrain:**

O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord!

God of God,  
Light of Light,  
Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Very God, Begotten, not created;

***Refrain***

Sing, choirs of angels,  
Hymns of exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
"Glory to God in the highest";

***Refrain***

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,  
Born this happy morning;  
Jesus to Thee be glory giv'n;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;

***Refrain***

## *O Come, Divine Messiah*

O come, Divine Messiah!  
The world in silence waits the day  
When hope shall sing its triumph,  
And sadness flee away.

### ***Refrain:***

*Dear Savior haste;  
Come, come to earth,  
Dispel the night and show Thy face,  
And bid us hail the dawn of grace.  
O come, divine Messiah!  
The world in silence waits the day  
When hope shall sing its triumph,  
And sadness flee away.*

O Christ, whom nations sigh for,  
Whom priest and prophet long foretold,  
Come break the captive fetters;  
Redeem the long-lost fold.

### ***Refrain***

You come in peace and meekness,  
And lowly will Thy cradle be;  
All clothed in human weakness  
We shall Thy Godhead see.

### ***Refrain***

## *O Holy Night*

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth;  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
'Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;

### *Chorus*

Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!  
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.  
O night, O holy night, O night divine.

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming;  
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand:  
So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,  
Here come the wise men from Orient land,  
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger,  
In all our trials born to be our friend;

### *Chorus*

He knows our need, *He guardeth us from danger*  
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!  
Behold your King! your King! before him bend!

Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is Love and His gospel is Peace;  
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,  
And in his name all oppression shall cease,  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful Chorus raise we;  
Let all within us praise his Holy name!

### *Chorus*

Christ is the Lord, *O praise His name forever!*  
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!  
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!

## Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones

Ye watchers and ye holy ones,  
Bright Seraphs, Cherubim, and Thrones,  
raise the glad strain, Alleluia!  
Cry out, Dominions, Princedoms, Powers,  
Virtues, Archangels, Angels' choirs:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

O higher than the Cherubim,  
more glorious than the Seraphim,  
lead their praises, Alleluia!  
Thou bearer of th' eternal Word,  
most gracious, magnify the Lord:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

### Behold a Virgin Bearing Him

Behold a virgin bearing him  
Who comes to save us from our sin;  
The prophets cry: prepare his way!  
Make straight his paths to Christmas Day.

Behold our Hope and Life and Light,  
The promise of the holy night;  
We lift our prayer and bend our knee  
To his great love and majesty.

Text: Michael Gannon; Melody: O Heiland Reis, Rheinfels Gesangbuch, 1666



